

Listening to the Voices of Novice Lecturers in Higher Education: A Qualitative Study

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The professional development of novice staff at the university still requires considerable improvement. In this research paper, and in an attempt to define a development model in higher education, attention is paid to the perspectives and judgments of novice university staff. The research focuses specifically on the expression of their problems, difficulties, dilemmas, and decisions related to their course plans and classroom contexts. The methodology applied here integrates processes of qualitative interpretation supported by the AQUAD Six data processing program in the presentation of results. These findings make clear the need to integrate novices into the teaching community in order to reduce the fears they experience on starting their academic careers and increase the benefits to the university community as a whole.

Participative Teaching-Learning Communities

Teaching competence at universities is becoming a relevant subject within educational research. However, publications related to it are not as abundant as they are in other educative levels (Borko, 2004; Day & Sachs, 2004; Richardson, 2001). This is even more serious at this precise moment, when attending to the needs of novice university teachers and reinforcing the professional skills of the expert ones is more urgent, for all of them must face the challenges of advanced 21st century society (Altbach, 2007). The challenge of assuming a deep transformation in the ways to generate, manage and distribute knowledge and learning requires a specific professional development of the university teaching staff in order to achieve conceptual and methodological changes. Therefore, much more research is necessary on university teachers' in service, and it is also urgent that pedagogy in higher education must focus on teaching-learning processes (Zabalza, 2007). As Blackmore (2009) stated, "Academic pedagogy is necessarily, as intellectual work, informed by theories and research, open to discussions that cannot be predetermined, requiring new inputs and directions, as each teaching moment is situated and non-replicable" (p. 870). Although this applies to all staff, research on the initial education of novice staff should concern us especially because, as happens at other levels of education, new university academics come up against what Veenman (1984), in writing about school teachers, called *reality shock*: "The collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life" (p. 143).

The identification, analysis and conceptualization of the demands of novice staff could be powerful instruments to advance research in teacher induction (Vonk, 1996) and it can change teaching and learning strategies in higher education (Nicholls, 2005). In today's perspective, learning is viewed as a social

phenomenon where effectiveness is greatly enhanced when it takes place within a community of practitioners (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2011).

In our networked society of information (Castells, 2000), with its high level of connectivity (Christakis & Fowler, 2009), there is general agreement among academics that the professional development of new lecturers should take place within the community formed by the center and the department to which the lecturer is assigned. We might, therefore, consider three approaches to this process. Firstly, Lave and Wenger (1991) defined the conceptualization of learning as a process of decision-taking, compromise and negotiation, which corresponds with understandings about the nature of scientific knowledge. The authors' concept of legitimate peripheral participation places both the learner and the expert in a situation of multiple pathways and alternatives, at a nexus of dynamic and complex relationships. Secondly, the view of pre-service teacher education taken by Cochran-Smith (2008) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasizes the idea that the knowledge acquired by the novice is not only connected to that of the expert, but also interacts with that of all his or her peers within the teaching community. Within a research community the expert continues to undergo a learning process, and, therefore, the acquisition of knowledge by both the expert and the novice takes place interdependently within the community as a process of mutual interaction. Thirdly, Wasser and Bresler (1996) focused on the configuration of an area of interpretation within the realm of qualitative. This is an important contribution towards a new model of professional development, as the novice operates in a participative context, where multiple voices and views regarding professorial activities interact in both convergent and divergent ways. Each one of these perspectives is characterized by the novice and expert teachers' collaborative and participative work, when they share and compare their own different interpretations,

building up knowledge within the very community in which novice teachers work. This underlines the essential role of novice-tutor relationship, for it helps to enrich shared learning atmospheres, where distances are shortened and relationships are developed.

In probing more deeply into the nature of learning communities in higher education, three persistent characteristics can be identified. In the first place, learning communities are located in genuine contexts, in actual places of work. These are communities in which everyday problems repeatedly arise, complex problems that are only partially identified, whose limits are hard to define (Roth & Tobin, 2004). Secondly, participants collaborate in order to achieve a particular goal or to meet a particular challenge (Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2009). Thirdly, experience and knowledge function as properties of the community in question (Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2009; Lieberman & Wood, 2002). These characteristics also serve to describe the circumstances in which new academics find themselves. The situations they have to face are complex and difficult to define: problems of discipline, student hostility, teacher insecurity, and so on. Usually there is a will to work together towards a goal, or towards an institutional obligation that has to be fulfilled; and, within the university community, the novice lecturer has access to a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be shared and debated.

Informed by this brief examination of the literature in this area, the aim of this research is to examine the thoughts and experiences of young academics in relation to their initiation into teaching (Holley & Colyar, 2009), in order to discover what realities and starting-points can enhance or inhibit agreement on a more social and community-orientated approach to the professional development process. Sixty newly appointed members of staff participated in the research. The sample was based on the category similar to a teaching assistant or assistant lecturer at American or other European universities. Voluntarily, they agreed in to share their difficulties, doubts, worries and in general all their positive and negative experiences of the world of university lecturing with the researchers. The research was focused upon the following research questions:

1. What are the main difficulties or problems that new academics face in their teaching at the university level?
2. What tensions do you perceive in relations with others (students and colleagues) within the framework of your professional development?
3. What do they see to be lacking and necessary in their development as university new staff?

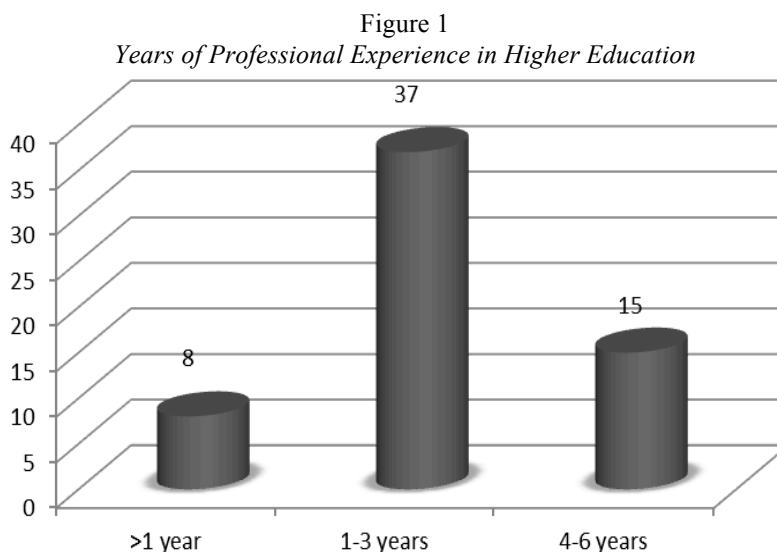
Methods

Participants

The young members of staff who participated in this study were teaching at the University of Alicante, Spain (UA). At the time when this research was carried out, there were a total of 119 novice academics in the UA. They were all invited to take part in the research. The cohort involved in this study was composed of 60 staff members, of whom 50% were female and 50% male. 90% of the participants were aged between 26 and 30, partly due to the fact that a contract as members of staff is the principal mode of entry into the body of teaching staff in Spanish universities, though not the only one. The participants who took part in this research came from all the faculties of the UA. The groups selected in this analysis have been created according to the length (in years) of teaching experience in higher education. As can be seen in Figure 1, the group has been classified into three categories based on years of experience: less than 1 year; between 1 and 3 years; and between 4 and 6 years.

Data Collection

A qualitative methodology enables researchers to analyze and interpret subjects' answers within the framework of their social context (Polkinghorne, 2006), making it possible to establish a higher degree of interaction between the collection of data and its analysis. To collect our data, we decided on a semi-structured interview format as appropriate for the present qualitative study (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina 2006). The interview is one of the most commonly used methods of approaching lecturers' practical epistemology and conceptions of teaching teacher in higher education (Dunkin, 1990; Kember & Kwan, 2000; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). During the interviews, subjects were asked to reflect on their teaching problems: programming, methodology, assessment, tensions in their relations, and perceived needs related to these difficulties. A total of 60 interviews were carried out between the September and December in 2008. The themes of reflection were sent by e-mail to all participants. The average duration of the interviews was between 20 and 30 minutes, except for one, which lasted for nearly an hour. The majority (47) considered it more comfortable that their responses were audio recorded. Only a few (13) responded the interview in writing. The audio-recorded interviews did not contain additional questions, and subjects were not interrupted while speaking. All the audio recordings of the interviews were later transcribed as written texts.



Procedure

We chose the AQUAD Six software, developed by Huber¹ (1998), due to its capacity to combine the processes of interpretation and codification of the interaction between the emergence of categories in the statements given by the participants and the conceptualization and structure that researchers should apply to the emerging categories via a codification process. The process was, therefore, based on, and faithful to, the first maps of emerging categories. These maps were analyzed and validated by three expert and two novice academics until a definitive configuration was agreed upon. This configuration was subsequently modified slightly due to adjustments deriving from the intensity of the codification and possible variants or emerging shades of meaning. In this way it was possible to understand more completely the phenomenon under examination² (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, the emerging codes of the narratives were articulated in such a way as to provide a rigorous organizational structure within the conceptual framework of the theory established in the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The three questions were used as a guiding framework for the first stage data analysis. Seven categories or codes emerged, and these were later

subdivided into multiple sub-codes. The initial emerging categories split and multiplied into different codes and sub-codes as the different researchers performed their shared analyses and deeper meanings were discovered through the reiteration of the interpretative process. Although our interpretative research is based on a qualitative approach, we also thought it convenient to present the results in a quantitative format. The frequency of appearance of certain key words and expressions were also measured. The AQUAD Six software also provided this additional computation.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

The first research question was: “What are the main difficulties or problems that new academics face in their professional teaching activities?” The results concerning this research question revealed three clusters in the novice lecturers’ narratives: course-planning difficulties (code 1), teaching implementation dilemmas (code 2) and tensions in assessment procedures (code 3). These clusters show slight variations and discriminations depending on different shades of meaning.

As can be seen in the Appendix (Section: course-planning difficulties), lecturers’ reflections on the course-planning phase concentrated on three aspects of the teaching process: preparing content and method, preparing learning materials and establishing a time schedule. All this proved hard to do, and created moments of anxiety. For example, on respondent said: “When you start teaching you have no idea about

¹ We would like to express our gratitude to Professor Huber for his review of this paper and his comments. His help was specifically provided during conversations with him during a period of research study at the Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft at the University of Tübingen (Germany). Recently the software has been developed to AQUAD Seven (Huber & Gürtler, 2012).

² In this process we combined a deductive and an inductive strategy, AQUAD Six supports a combination of both.

anything. . . . I was very scared, . . . I felt very insecure” (D055)³.

The participants were anxious to prepare their classes properly (see Appendix, sub-code 1.1). Similarly, they were worried about the preparation of teaching resources to facilitate students’ learning (see Appendix, sub-code 1.2). The novices described their deep concern when faced with the need to plan the content of a subject. They were worried that they might not have sufficient command of the content matter to respond adequately to students’ questions and the demands of the curriculum, and in every case they stated that this required a considerable effort:

On the one hand, the range of subjects we are required to teach because we are “new to the job” is huge; this means that every year we have to prepare content, programs, practice sessions and so on, for subjects that sometimes we are seeing for the first time, which in turn requires a lot of bibliographic work and self-preparation for the classes. (D012)

In general it is clear that for most novice academics preparing the subject means preparing the content to be taught rather than the processes of teaching. One subject explained: “I prepared the topics carefully, but I felt that I didn’t have full command of the content” (D055). Another stated: “Sometimes you have to know fifteen times more than what you actually have to teach, in order to be confident especially” (D004).

In their statements, the participants revealed no knowledge or awareness of the new strategies of teaching-learning in the European Higher Education Area (i.e., a learning process focused on the student and the development of his or her abilities and competences). Class preparation focused on content, with keywords like “explain” and “transmit”. One participant explained: “A good teacher has to be able to transmit knowledge, has to know a lot and also know how to transmit it and how to make it attractive while it is being transmitted” (D021).

Participants appeared to doubt, however, whether they had selected the content adequately or sufficient command of specific content areas, and whether they could convey their knowledge so that students can understand their explanations. In addition to this feeling of insecurity, there was a striking difference between the frequency with which novices mentioned key concepts like “teaching” or “content” and that with which they used other expressions like “learning,” “objectives,” or “competences,” which would follow

more closely the new proposals of teaching-learning in the European Higher Education Area. This result suggests that the academics processes at the UA, and perhaps in Spanish universities in general, were promoting a view of curricular design as one concerned with the organization of content rather than one also concerned with teaching as learning construction within a community of practice. Another group of voices expressed their difficulties with the organization and distribution of time in teaching (see Appendix, sub-code 1.3: Time scheduling):

The main difficulty was in finding out, for example, how much material [content] would take up an hour of class time, and I remember that they told us we had 45 hours and I didn’t know if that was a lot or not very much, I didn’t know how far you could stretch a class hour. (D008)

The second grouping of narratives coincides in the view that the everyday work of novice academics is the implementation of course plans, actual classroom praxis. These reflections revealed greater diversity among the different narratives than was the case with those referring to curricular planning. Code 2 deals with narratives concerned with lecturers’ fears regarding personal traits and communication skills (see Appendix, sub-code 2.1) as well as negative conditioning factors influencing their teaching (see Appendix, sub-code 2.2: Teacher-student ratio; and sub-code 2.3: Infrastructure). It also shows worries about the subject itself (see Appendix, sub-code 2.4: Theory and practice; and sub-code 2.5: Usefulness of the subject).

Sub-code 2.1 (Personal teaching skills) refers specifically to personal traits like shyness or social insecurity, as well as to problems deriving from a lack of communication skills in expressing, transmitting or simply explaining content to the students. This is well expressed in the following: “I’ve had some bad moments there [while teaching the subject] even in class, you think you know something and when you try to explain it you lose the concepts, and I’ve had a bad time” (D023); and,

I’m beginning to realize that I do have full command of the content. However, I am aware that I have difficulty in expressing myself and in making myself understood. What I try to do is emphasize what I really mean, but I get the impression that they look as if they have understood nothing and that they are not following what I’m trying to explain. (D019)

These data show that sub-code 2.2 (Student-teacher ratio) was a decisive problem area for these novices. It is undoubtedly one of the biggest problems on the

³ “Docentia” is the name assigned to the project when entering it into AQUAD Six. Academics’ statements were numbered to ensure their anonymity.

Spanish university landscape. Many subjects reported classes of 200 or even 300 students. Sub-code 2.3 (Infrastructure) refers to deficiencies and occasions when the infrastructure makes methodological improvement difficult:

The classrooms are not suitable for proper teaching because they contain fixed desks. . . . You can't get the class to form a circle, act out a scene or carry out an activity that requires movement, because they are completely rigid and not very useful. (D003)

Another aspect that worried these novices is the difficulty deriving from the theory-practice distinction (see Appendix, sub-code 2.4). The problems identified were both the teaching of practice and theory, and the difficulty of showing students how they are applied and interrelated. For example, one participant noted: "They don't see the usefulness of the theory in the practice. And that is a problem" (D024).

Some participants reported greater misgivings when teaching practical classes than when teaching theory, because in the former student participation is more unpredictable: "I get very nervous [in practical classes]" (D004); and "I try to get them to participate and there's no way" (D027). It is also significant that some subjects referred to their fear of having no counter-arguments when students question the usefulness of the subject (see Appendix, sub-code 2.5).

Assessment procedures were another source of reflection. It is one of the areas in which novices felt most insecure and worried. For instance, "In assessment, I'm only a beginner . . . and I ask myself, 'Am I grading this properly?'" (D027); and, "You never find an assessment methodology that is completely satisfying. They all have defects, none of them are perfect, they all leave gaps, they all cause unfairness" (D032).

The highest number of narrative segments is to be found in sub-code 3.2 (Objectivity). Young academics worried a lot about guaranteeing objectivity (reliability and validity) in assessment procedures and about being fair in assessing the effort made by a student. One participant explained:

Where assessment is concerned, of course you are always looking for an ideal objective model, because it's very difficult, but I try to be as objective as possible and try to make sure that the margin of subjectivity is relatively small, but, well, it's difficult. (D042)

This concern is significant because it reflects more a final-examination model rather than a formative-continuous assessment model. At the same time, the

aspect of complexity (see Appendix, sub-code 3.3) raised by some participants in assessment procedures is maximized when their view of assessment is more integrative: "In my view, assessment is one of the most important things in teaching, and I don't think I do it very well, but bearing in mind that I don't think anybody does it well, because it's very complicate" (D009); and, "I believe it's difficult to be completely objective and fair in assessing the effort made by students and their performance" (D026).

The presence of sub-code 3.1 (Amount of work) provides evidence of a series of complaints about the effort involved and the time required to assess an excessively large number of students or to apply a continuous assessment procedure: "I think that when you get to exam number 150 you are not grading in the same way as you did with the first one" (D024); and, "[Continuous assessment] looks very nice but in practice it's impossible" (D030).

Research Question 2

Our second research question was, "What tensions do you perceive in relations with others (students and colleagues) within the framework of your professional development?" Teaching is an eminently relational activity. Our second research question therefore centers on reflections made by new academics regarding their relationships with their students and with their staff colleagues. The codes responding to this research question are codes 4 (Student/group-class problem) and 5 (Tension in relations with colleagues). The former is subdivided into three sub-codes (see Appendix: generally speaking, the perception of tension in the learning environment and a lack of proper behavior among first-year students. They include the perception of a low academic level and lack of motivation among students, a lack of participation, or the dilemma of choosing between being a severely demanding teacher and being over-friendly towards the students. All these reflections are closely interrelated.

A lack of discipline is not normally a serious problem in university classrooms (see Appendix, sub-code 4.1: Classroom atmosphere). Yet participants' statements in the interviews do reveal problems in maintaining a suitable learning ethos in class (e.g., silence, respect, attention):

But what is a fact is the attitude they have sometimes: what you might call a lack of values. I don't know, keeping quiet, listening, and showing some consideration for the other student they have to work with, and so on. That sort of thing. (D036)

The highest percentage is to be found in sub-code 4.2 (Students' academic level). Participants considered

that students' command of conceptual notions was below that which they expected. In reality, the problems involved in this sub-code relate to students' lack of basic knowledge, which leads to difficulty in learning new content or to difficulties arising from disparity in competence levels within the group. This sub-code is well characterized in the following extract:

Here I would emphasize the gaps they have. For instance, when they start the first year they don't know how to formulate. So what do you do? You have limited time, only just enough and you start teaching them how to formulate, so then you can't cover the other content or you have to go quicker. On the other hand, if you skip over formulation and tell them to sort themselves out, to learn to formulate by themselves, you have a learning gap. Then that becomes a problem. (D036)

This code also includes points regarding academic motivation and a lack of student participation. The majority of participants saw their students' academic level, which they regarded as insufficient and confused, as the root of their teaching problems. Most of them stated that they did not know how to handle the diversity among the student population, or they did not know what methods to apply (Borko, 2004) when giving their classes. We conclude, therefore, that if these are typical views of those held by novice staff in Spanish universities, then there should be a serious effort to prepare novice academics to teach classes with a high degree of heterogeneity.

In sub-code 4.3 (Information and communications technology [ICT] and reduction of personal contact), the participants expressed their fear that the use of ICTs might weaken their personal relationships with the students. For instance, "I've realized that when we use the campus intranet for personal tutorials, the relation is cold and impersonal. Really, I prefer face-to-face conversations with students, to find out what difficulties they have and help to overcome them" (D010); and,

In virtual tutorials they can ask you things and you can answer but without knowing whether they understand or not, I prefer to have the students in front of me when they have questions to ask, and I can ask them, "Do you understand?" or I can see the expression on their faces. (D040)

Sub-code 4.4 (Dilemma in the teacher's role) subsumes lecturers' doubts and uncertainties as to whether they are too "demanding" or over-friendly towards the students. For example, "Sometimes, I actually feel that I'm too close to them, that there might be consequences" (D025).

Descriptions of relations with departmental colleagues are included in code 5 (Relations and tensions with colleagues), where the most important avenues for improvement of professional interaction (planning, trust etc) are grouped together. This code is divided into three sub-codes, the results of which are shown in the Appendix.

In the novice academics' opinion, planning was the key element to be improved in their relations with their colleagues. They emphatically insisted on the lack of course planning or the distribution of content among different subjects, the organization of practical work, and so on. For instance: "My experience was. . . It was a very badly-planned and badly-organized subject" (D022); and, "As to negative aspects in university teaching, it's course planning. . . Content is repeated. . . and the students feel that the same things are taught over and over again, and they never get anywhere" (D015).

In summary, new academics' see their interpersonal relations with their departmental colleagues as lacking in interdependence and planning in the organization of different subjects: "I don't see much planning" (D053). This phenomenon was perceived as a problem in teaching progress because, for example, there was overlapping content among subjects or practical tasks are even repeated, all of which had a negative effect on students' learning. The low percentage in sub-code 5.2 (Trust among colleagues) suggests that no real collaborative culture was experienced and that the university lecturer still worked on his or her personal island of knowledge. For instance, one participant noted: "You have to adapt to what the professor wants you to teach and how he wants you to teach it, that's a problem, you have no freedom" (D014). The participants mentioned, also, albeit with a fairly low percentage in sub-code 5.3, the existence of certain tensions in departmental relations, "absurd vendettas" (D003). These findings confirm the "most salient and pervasive source of dissatisfaction" (Turner & Boice, 1989, p. 55) among novice academics where their colleagues were concerned and suggest that isolation was the most frequent element in the process of induction into the university setting (Barlow & Antoniou, 2007).

Research Questions 3

Research question 3 was: "What have you found necessary and lacking in your development as university lecturers?" Finally, in response to the third research question, the participants expressed their views on their needs, which would help them in reducing the difficulties referred to in the first two research questions. Two codes emerged here: codes 6 (Academic needs) and 7 (Development needs).

The demand for advice and orientation both in teaching and in research and institutional work is striking. Sub-code 6.1 (Mentoring) is particularly noticeable with the highest frequency of perceived need. Many participants felt that they needed a university lecturer-model, or someone who could advise them when they started their teaching and academic careers, as the following narrative makes clear:

I think it would be a good idea to create the figure of tutor for novice lecturers, a person who has worked for some time in the university and could act as a “guide” so that the adaptation period could be as short as possible. (D001)

The participants also identified teamwork in university teaching as being highly relevant. Sub-code 6.2 (Teamwork with colleagues) shows a greater percentage of instances. The following extracts portray the demand in this category: “Here we seem to live on islands with spaces in between. . . . I think relations with other people are fundamental” (D043); and, “Colleagues’ comments provide more than the teacher himself can in training courses” (D051).

Code 7 (Training needs) integrates what were seen as essentials in lecturer training, and refers basically to a demand for didactic and pedagogical training and also for preparation for research activities. Sub-code 7.1 (For teaching) shows a greater percentage of instances than the rest of the sub-codes that constitute this topic. The novice lecturer perceived a lack of initial teacher education: “A huge gap” (D048); and, “Gaps, yes, a lot” (D004). The gaps referred to by the participants include a lack of pedagogical teacher training. The novice academics demand initial training which would help them, for instance, to “learn about methodologies that can be used in class,” “acquire communication skills” in order to make better contact with students or manage classes. Some participants even explicitly suggested initial training for all university staff and the urgent creation of an “advisor or mentor for those starting in the profession.” This is reflected in the following narratives: “A lack of training for teaching. . . . There’s no guidance of any kind, nothing whatsoever” (D041); “Pedagogically they could help us a bit more” (D036); and,

I think there should be more training to be a teacher. I mean, how to handle a class . . . when you have to start teaching you feel that things have changed a lot since you were a student. So I think you should be given some guidance as regards the pedagogy. (D019)

Faced with this unsatisfied demand for training, these novice academics resorted to their own personal

effort and day-to-day experience in the profession (i.e., trial and error). The participants described how they constructed their own teaching expertise through their individual experience, which after a while they defined as “autonomous self-help.” The demand for training in subject content was lower. The emergence of sub-code 7.3 (Criticism of the training received) shows how they critically questioned the guidance they received; in some cases, in the context of teaching praxis which they considered to be highly theoretical and separated from the reality of the learning process: “I always say that my best teachers are my students, . . . rather than important lecturers, and much more than professors” (D049). They therefore demanded proper professional development. For example: “I think the most important thing for a university lecturer is commitment, but perhaps it is necessary to have a professional base, and I lean towards professionalization” (D053).

Conclusion

The participants’ points of view and thoughts as a whole enabled us not only to identify and contextualize their difficulties and concerns, but also to know the reasons of their worries, fears and dilemmas. In many cases, it is possible to discern the contradictions between the indelible memories left on them by the system they experienced as students and the new teaching perspectives they are now discovering (Flores & Day, 2006).

The participants showed considerable concern about a lack of proper preparation, command and explanation of subject content (code 1), and about their students’ academic level (sub-code 2.2), in particular as regards a lack of basic knowledge. Similarly, in their relations with their colleagues they found that there was a serious lack of coordination in the organization of content into subjects (sub-code 6.1). If we compare these data with those of lower reference in sub-codes 4.3 (ICT and reduction of personal contact), 4.4 (Dilemma in the teacher’s role), 5.2 (Trust among colleagues), or 6.2 (Teamwork with colleagues)—all of which refer to the need for interaction for good teaching praxis—we discover a view of teaching predominantly focused on the transmission of knowledge and a concept of learning as an individual rather than social process. This does not fit well with the needs 21st century learners do have, within the context of the information and network society.

In their relations with their colleagues, they also referred more to coordination than trust and, where support is concerned, they referred more to the figure of the mentor as a model, rather than to the possibility of learning networks. Finally, although they demanded more teacher education, a far smaller proportion of the participants demanded that such training should be critically and reflexively related to the context.

This traditional view of teaching may be the reason why early experience in the university teaching community can be filled with fear and uncertainty for novice lecturers. We have found expressions like: “I was very afraid, I had a terrible time because I felt that I was not in control. . . . I felt very insecure” (D055); “The insecurity when you teach your first classes” (D050); “Failed attempts” (D025); and, “The first year of teaching was very hard” (D038). Together with these fears, a large proportion of the narratives also contain a demand for support and guidance: “You’re always looking for a subjectively ideal [teaching] model among your colleagues” (D042); and, “I certainly needed someone to tell me more or less how to maintain the rhythm of the class” (D021). Nevertheless, although the previously-received view of the teaching model is maintained, there is also evidence of a willingness to approach a model more in agreement with the community-learning concept: “I want to ask [the students] how they see me as a teacher and try to improve” (D020); and, “In my view, being a university teacher means commitment to the students . . . [and] being concerned about the way you teach your classes” (D016).

The observed contradictions clearly show that novice teachers’ professional development requires considerable reconceptualization, in spite of the efforts made by university institutions in Spain. Conclusions from this research reinforce our conviction that individualized in service training models are unsatisfactory. Social networks and participation in learning communities are required in order to avoid isolation, eliminate fear and promote well-grounded professional development, since the community is an intrinsic condition for professional teaching knowledge (Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2009; Lieberman & Wood, 2002). This last aspect, pointed out by Whitcomb et al. (2009), can boost considerable changes in the lecturers’ knowledge. While it has been generally believed that in basic university training the mentor should supervise learners’ beliefs and practices (Marcelo, 2008), today’s collaborative culture creates a richer, shared environment in which distances disappear and relationships are fostered. Thus, the current culture in professional development favors the formation of shared learning spaces in which distances between academics and students are less pronounced and relationships are given importance (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Finally, as Flores and Day (2006) held, it is necessary that university novice teachers’ training should be mainly focused on their workplace conditions and situations, as well as on their centers and departments’ culture. We are referring to a reflexive approach in which an integrated learning concept

focused on the ego, the other and society as a whole (Glass & Rud, 2012; Nussbaum, 2006).

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Appendix
Summary with Codes, Cub-Codes, and Examples

CODES	EXAMPLES
1 Difficulties in course planning <i>This code inquiries into the difficulties the professor has in course planning.</i>	
1.1 Content preparation Difficulties in course content preparation	I felt that I was not in control of the contents. (D055)
1.2 Materials preparation Difficulties in preparation of teaching materials	The first difficulty is when you face something new, that is, new subjects, to program a new material. (D017)
1.3 Time scheduling Problems with time scheduling regarding class planning	I don't know how far I can distribute a class hour. (D021)
2 Problems in teaching praxis <i>This code analyzes the problems of everyday work: the implementation of course plans and actual classroom praxis.</i>	
2.1 Personal teaching skills Lack of skills or confidence in teaching	A lack of training for teaching. (D041)
2.2 Student-teacher ratio High student-teacher ratio	Many students in class. It's horrible! (D011)
2.3 Infrastructures Lack of resources and infrastructures	I have always three students by computer! (D060)
2.4 Theory and practice Student problems in linking theory and practice	They do not see the utility theory to practice. And that's a problem. (D024)
2.5 Usefulness of the subject Student rejection towards theoretical subjects	Students discuss the validity of the subject. (D018)
3 Assessment difficulties <i>References to difficulties in the evaluation process</i>	
3.1 Amounts of work Excessive amounts of correction and evaluation work	Assessment is horrible, horrible corrected for the volume and the amount of practice. (D057)
3.2 Objective Difficulty in being objective	I always think I'm being unfair. (D035)
3.3 Complexity Conscious of lack of evaluation competences	Assessment is very complicated. (D010)
4 Student/group-class problems <i>Deals with narratives concerned their relationships with their students within the framework of their professional development.</i>	
4.1 Classroom atmosphere Problems maintaining a good classroom atmosphere	Every year at least one student who questioned my figure and my authority in the classroom. (D042)
4.2 Students' academic level Students' academic level regarding the course content	I like that much better prepared students come to the University. (D040)
4.3 ICT and reduction of personal contact The lessening of personal contact with students due to ICT	With the use of the virtual campus and mentoring, the relationship continues to be cold and distant. (D010)
4.4 Dilemma in the teacher's role Dilemma regarding the teacher's role in the teacher-student relationship	I don't know how I can dominate the relationship teacher-student. (D030)
5 Relations and tensions with colleagues <i>Deals with narratives concerned with the relationships with their staff colleagues within the framework of their professional development.</i>	
5.1 Planning Lack of co-ordination in organizing and planning of teaching	I don't see much planning. (D053)

5.2 Trust among colleagues Mistrust among colleagues regarding work performance	Colleagues think that we are students or scholarship. (D038)
5.3 Departmental tensions Departmental /Faculty tensions and/or conflicts	The existence of certain tensions in departmental relations, “absurd vendettas” (D003)
6 Academic needs <i>This code analyzes narratives which refer to the academic needs in their development as university new staff.</i>	
6.1 Mentoring Requests for academic mentoring	Advisor or mentor for those starting in the profession. (D001)
6.2 Teamwork with colleagues The need to foster teamwork with colleagues	We need rather than to the possibility of learning networks (D044)
6.3 Global academic information Demand for global academic information	I want to know more information new teaching-learning in the European Higher Education Area (D025)
7 Training needs <i>This code analyzes the narratives that refer to a demand for didactic and pedagogical training and also for preparation for research activities.</i>	
7.1 For teaching Lack of teaching competence	Pedagogically they could help us a bit more. (D036)
7.2 For research Lack of research competence	The field of research is very difficult for me. (D047)
7.3 Criticism of the training received Criticism of the training didactic and pedagogical	I've been to some theoretical and practical courses, but very little theoretical and practical, and then I still have that gap. (D033)
7.4 In subject content Lack of adequate knowledge regarding subject content	Sometimes I missed a university curriculum. (D059)